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# Volunteer Probation Assistants’ Awareness of Functions and Problems encountered alongside Probation and Parole Officers

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## Abstract

*Although extensive researches on prison have been carried out, few domestic studies still exist regarding Volunteer Probation Assistants’ (VPAs’) awareness of functions and responsibilities and the problems they encounter alongside Probation and Parole Officers (PPOs) while in the performance of their duties. Thus, this study evaluates the level of awareness of functions among VPAs and the problems encountered by both VPAs and PPOs. This study adopted a quantitative approach, specifically, the descriptive-survey method where only those who were active at the time of this study were chosen. As a result, this study yields that the VPAs understood their tasks; and understood the implications of their work as key indicators of social capital and therapists of behavioral change. By large, the VPAs and PPOs encounter problems on budget, absence of VPAs in the barangays, and long distances travelled by both before reaching the clients’ workplace or residence. Anyhow, the VPAs were capable in coping with the challenges despite financial difficulties they experienced and were able to effectively carry out the tasks they have voluntarily accepted. The PPOs as well, were able to deal with the pressures and stresses because of the commitment of their active supervising VPAs despite their busy hours and the arduous travels to reach the clients.*

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Keywords: Awareness, Problems, Volunteer Probation Assistants, Probation and Parole Officers.

## Introduction

Correction officers devotedly function as an important component of Criminal Justice System; however, crimes continue to exist. Thus, the government conceived one of the major goals which is to establish a better and more humane type of correctional system that promotes the reformation of offenders which certainly reduces recidivism. This

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humane type of correctional system, non-institutional corrections or the community-based corrections, mainly refer to the probation services (Puguon, 2005; Gahar, 2012; Storh & Walsh, 2011, & PD, 968).

It was in the 20th century when the community-based corrections started gaining the attention of almost every state. The community-based programs which include volunteers were even considered to replace the institutional corrections (Siegel & Bartollas, 2011). These programs however, may give rise to major challenges on would-be volunteers according to Merrill (2006).

One of the challenges include “vigilante volunteers” (by David Foot) known as younger “new” volunteer or the middle-aged who are expectant from the association they join in and who may follow their whims (Graff, 2001 & Ferronato, 1995). Still, many countries opted to utilize and mobilize volunteers in order to meet the demands of work and lessen the pressures relative to the performance of correction duties. Japan had set the best example in terms of volunteerism where the services of few Professional Probation Officers (PPOs) was combined with a large number of unpaid probation volunteers, known as Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) or “Hogoshi” (Yokochi, 2004).

The very concept of volunteerism in probation is to provide aid for the reformation and rehabilitation of offenders. Its birth can be traced in the early years of correctional service (Jewkes & Bennett, 2008). According to Champion (2007), volunteers are of great help to probation officers for they fill in the missing link in terms of correction. In addition, they provide much needed services to victims, inmates, parolees, probationers, and their families who were forfeited with the said services due to limited funds (Storh & Walsh, 2011). In the Philippines, the volunteer probation aides/assistants [VPAs] (PD, 968; Volunteerism, n.d.; PPA, n.d.; & RA, 10707) are considered partners of the PPOs in reformation and rehabilitation activities. Graft (2001) purported that partnering with volunteer staff often requires supervision as they do their work safely. It was likewise noted that the presence of volunteers truly aids in the agency’s survival.

With the full support of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the United Nations Associations of the Far East Institute (UNAFEI), the revitalization of the VPA Program was carried out successfully especially in terms of training of PPOs and some selected VPAs per region. With this, the VPAs have been the agency’s effective partners in pursuing client rehabilitation towards a better quality of life in the community for the past years (Volunteerism, n.d. & Personal Communication, 2016).

The Chairperson of the National Committee on Volunteerism said that the mission of the VPA program is to promote the rehabilitation and development of Parole and Probation clients through a competent corps of volunteers using the holistic approach in volunteer and community resource development. This approach enhances and develops the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of a person (DOJ – PPA National Annual Report, 2013).

Aside from the VPA Program which encourages the participation of VPAs as partners of PPOs under DOJ-PPA, the agency has two other program thrusts, namely: Restorative Justice (RJ) and Therapeutic Community (TC) (DOJ-PPA National Annual Report, 2014).

The Restorative Justice (RJ) is a program that helps process the restoration of broken relationships among stakeholders. This is achieved through the collaboration of the PPO

and the VPA which paves the way for the stakeholders such as offender, victim, and community to be healed from harm caused by the crime committed. These partners can initiate a circle of support for clients and victims to prevent further crimes that will help them contribute to nation-building (Quijano, 2010; DOJ-PPA National Annual Report, 2014).

The VPAs trained under the Restorative Justice Program may participate as restorative justice planners, facilitators or as mediators. Furthermore, they can also take an important role in the resolution of conflicts by becoming better mediators than the officers. Most often, volunteers are more influential in the community and in the court (Umbreit, 2001).

Another program of DOJ-PPA is the Therapeutic Community (TC) now known as the Therapeutic Community Ladderized Program (TCLP) which is defined as a self-help social learning treatment model. “The Therapeutic Community is an environment that helps people get help while helping themselves. It operates in a similar fashion to a functional family with a hierarchical structure of older and younger members. Each member has a defined role and responsibilities for sustaining the proper functioning of the TC. There are sets of rules and community norms that members commit to live by and uphold upon entry. The primary “therapist” and teacher are the community itself, consisting of peers, staff or PPOs and even VPAs, who, as role models of successful personal change, serve as guides in the recovery process” (DOJ-PPA National Annual Report, 2014, p. 16).

During its early implementation, it was primarily used in the rehabilitation of drug offenders until Republic Act (RA) No. 6425 otherwise known as Dangerous Drugs Act of 1972 was amended by RA No. 9165 which is known as Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 with stiffer penalty for drug cases. Hence, this probation now rarely handles drug cases, rather it focuses on helping clients with behavioral problems. The TC adheres to the precepts of “right living” – Responsible Love and Concern; Truth and Honesty; the Here and Now; Personal Responsibility for Destiny; Social Responsibility (brother’s keeper); Moral Code; Work Ethics and Pride in Quality (DOJ-PPA National Annual Report, 2014, p. 16). Some of the activities in this program require the support and assistance of VPAs, especially to the clients.

The harmonization of the three programs is depicted by the simple diagram of the umbrella. The rod holding up the umbrella represents Restorative Justice (RJ) which is the philosophical foundation of the agency mission and thereby, provides the unifying principle for all rehabilitation activities integrated within the Therapeutic Community Modality (Quijano, 2010; DOJ-PPA National Annual Report, 2014, p. 16).

Many studies have been conducted on volunteerism including prison volunteers and community-based corrections on Volunteer Probation Officers (Akashi, 2016). Also, there are domestically published materials focused on the volunteer system that described the responsibilities of the VPAs and PPOs. However, there is a little discussion on the awareness of VPAs and problems encountered together with the PPOs who they work with for the reformation and rehabilitation of their clients such as probationers, parolees and conditional pardonees.

“Citizen participation takes many forms and has varying degrees of support around the world. Yet there are trends, issues, and challenges that cross-national boundaries and affect

volunteers in all sectors and all settings” (Merrill, 2005, p. 9). Despite the presence of volunteers, challenges are still affecting some organizations which include the parole and probation offices under the Department of Justice. Thus, the conduct of this research which focuses on: (1) the VPAs’ awareness of functions, (2) problems encountered by both VPAs and PPOs concerning their clients and how they cope with these challenges.

### Theoretical or Conceptual Framework

Researches on Social Capital theory (Kabelkova, 2013; The Saguaro Seminar, n.d.; & Fahey, 2003) and Behavioral Modification (Abadinsky, 2011) were used as foundations of this study.

**Awareness.** Through volunteerism, people can build social capital by creating new ties and strengthening old ones. How to build social capital in each community, family, and the like are effectively carried out by volunteers from the community (The Saguaro Seminar, n.d.). Volunteers are considered an important indicator of social capital as they represent a highly organized level of cooperation to provide mutual benefits (Fahey, 2003). Thus, knowledge of volunteerism can achieve a great impact on the community (Foronda, 2003).

Volunteerism therefore, is vital in raising awareness among VPAs. Through volunteerism, the VPAs can have a full understanding of the reasons that influence people to act differently leading them into disputes. Furthermore, knowing their duties and responsibilities will not only make them better VPAs to their clients, but also, fruitful citizens of the country.

Based on the Volunteer Probation Aide (VPA) Program Policy Guidelines of the DOJ-PPA, the VPAs are expected to perform their functions and responsibilities delegated to them during their orientation and training. They supervise clients at home and at work. They may also serve as “probation counsellors” (Sandu, 2016). Thus, the VPAs’ knowledge of their functions can help them become effective in reforming and rehabilitating the clients through behavior modification.

Behavior modification theory points that behavior is the result of learning responses. Therefore, one can be responsible for changing his or her behavior (Abadinsky, 2011). The primary “therapists” and teachers are the community itself which include the VPAs of DOJ-PPA who, as role models of successful personal change, serve as guides in the recovery process (DOJ-PPA National Annual Report, 2014:16). Thus, in behavior modification, VPAs can be effective as therapists to their clients especially if they are well-versed with their functions and responsibilities (Abadinsky, 2011).

**Problems.** In an organization, it is expected that a lot of pressures, tensions, misunderstandings, conflicts and the like may arise. As noted by Tzanakis (2013), the connection of social capital as being largely a product of social structure may spur conflicts.

However, social capital can be demonstrated through various types of political or community participation (Kabelkova, 2013). It includes resources such as information, trust, and cooperative labor acquired and mobilized through social connections. It also reveals how these basic resources provide a means for people to cooperate on joint problems (Woods, 2006; Garson, 2006).

Social capital that fits volunteering among VPAs does not only produce positive effects but also negative ones. Sometimes, problems arise because of the social structure and the

kind of environment they are working with. But certainly, if they work together, they can cope with the difficulties.

### **Objectives**

This study aims to determine the (a) VPAs' awareness of their functions and responsibilities; (b) problems that may directly or indirectly affect both VPAs and PPOs; and (c) significant differences in the problems that may directly or indirectly affect both VPAs and PPOs.

### **Methodology**

This study evaluates the objectives using the quantitative approach specifically, descriptive-survey to collect a sufficient number of respondents and collate data in a short duration of time. Quantitative approach was used as it is the easiest way (Kabelkova, 2013) to test all the variables already identified in the VPA program policy guidelines of DOJ-PPA; and variables identified through observations including those taken from previous researches regarding volunteerism in general. Simple random sampling was used to gather data from the VPAs and fortunately, there were 118 Supervising VPAs (Note: VPAs as Resource Persons were not included) and a total enumeration was applied for the 27 PPOs who participated in this study. Only those who were active at the time of this study were included.

Questionnaire-checklist, interviews, and observations were used to triangulate information gathered. Questions on awareness were based on the VPA Program Policy Guidelines of DOJ-PPA, while questions on challenges were adopted from international and local studies as well as information gathered from PPOs. The questions on awareness were answered by VPAs only while the questions on challenges were answered by both VPAs and PPOs. Mean was used to describe the problems and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the significant difference on problems since it uses an interval scale.

Upon the approval of the panelists (members of the review committee), and with the permission of the adviser and the dean of the college, an endorsement letter was secured from the latter for the conduct of a pre-test of the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument, based on the Cronbach's Alpha Test which was at  $> .8$  – Good level, implies that there is a high degree of consistency. However, some items were revised while others were maintained based on feedbacks of VPAs and PPOs from a nearby field office who validated the instrument. After the enhancement of the questionnaire, the researcher proceeded to the office of the Regional Director for approval and subsequently, permission was granted to the researcher for the distribution of said questionnaire to the respondents.

For the interpretation of results of the weighted mean, the 4-point (1–4) Likert Response Scale with the qualitative description and interpretation was used.

Scale	Mean Range	Qualitative Description	Interpretation
4	3.26–4.00	Very Much Aware	VPA is fully aware and understands the functions & responsibilities
		Very Much Serious	Always a problem
3	2.51–3.25	Aware	VPA is aware of the functions & responsibilities but does not fully understand
		Serious	Often a problem
2	1.76–2.50	Moderately Aware	VPA is a little bit aware of the functions & responsibilities and understands a little
		Moderately Serious	Rarely a problem
1	1.00–1.75	Not Aware	VPA is unaware of functions & responsibilities & does not really understand
		Not Serious	Never a problem

## Results and Discussion

The major purpose of this study is to analyze and describe the awareness of VPAs of their functions and responsibilities; the problems that may directly or indirectly affect both VPAs and PPOs; and the significant difference in the problems that may directly or indirectly affect both VPAs and PPOs.

### *VPAs' Awareness of their Functions and Responsibilities*

Table 1 illustrates the summary of mean, standard deviation and qualitative description on the extent of awareness of VPAs of their functions and responsibilities. Based on the data, *to work in close consultation and cooperation with the Supervising Officer* got the highest mean of 3.79, interpreted as very much aware. This study implies that the active VPAs and PPOs have communication and harmonious working relationship. They have maintained and strengthened their relationship through partnership with the same view of successfully supervising the clients. Open communication becomes a strong key for better rapport between VPAs. This partnership is exactly what the Parole and Probation Administration (PPA) expects its volunteers (PPA, n.d.). In fact, the Parole and Probation Administrator admitted that the accomplishments would not have been possible without the assistance of the VPAs to the PPOs (DOJ-PPA National Annual Report, 2014).

VPAs and PPOs have the so-called social capital; the social capital which Putnam (n.d.) believed as a facilitator of interpersonal cooperation. Partnership in volunteerism is important because professionals or volunteers cannot work alone (Montejo, 2007). It also promotes the growth of volunteerism in a wider community because people are

encouraged to work together in eliminating criminal activities and other issues (Jewkes & Bennett, 2008).

**Table 1. The Summary of Extent of Awareness of the VPAs**

	<b>Functions and Responsibilities</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Qualitative Description</b>
a.	To work in close consultation and cooperation with the Supervising Officer	3.79	Very Much Aware
b.	To give guidance and counseling to clients	3.70	Very Much Aware
c.	To keep all information about the supervisee in strict confidentiality	3.67	Very Much Aware
d.	To maintain an honest recording and monthly reporting of activities to the Supervising Officer	3.62	Very Much Aware
e.	To develop a substantial and quality time for supervision of clients	3.61	Very Much Aware
f.	To endeavor to heal the victim, client and community relationship	3.49	Very Much Aware
g.	To refer to corresponding agencies clients with spiritual, mental, social, emotional, economic, physical or health needs	3.48	Very Much Aware
h.	To attend Therapeutic Community, Restorative Justice and other rehabilitation activities as may be required	3.47	Very Much Aware
i.	To implement treatment objectives	3.34	Very Much Aware
j.	To be a job placement facilitator	3.21	Aware
	<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.54</b>	<b>Very Much Aware</b>

*Giving guidance and counseling to clients* is the second-highest in rank with a mean of 3.70, interpreted as very much aware. This suggests that VPAs know they can be of help in addressing family problems of their clients. The VPAs can be considered as an asset to the agency. With them, it won't be difficult for the agency to shape the behavior of its clients.

It is said that VPAs are different from other volunteers because they perform a highly specialized supervision service that gives direct impacts on the clients' behavior (PPA, n.d.). This was evident in the conduct of counseling by field officers and VPAs focusing on compliance with the conditions of probation, parole and pardon that also include minimizing behavioral problems, enhancing marital relationships and the like. In reality, therapy under behavior modification proves that VPAs were considered the primary "therapists" and teachers (DOJ-PPA National Annual Report, 2014) for they exhibit an example to their clients while listening to them (Abadinsky, 2011).

The result of this study also conveys that VPAs know and understand the true nature of their job since they are dealing with confidential matters that can be damaging and degrading to their clients. *Keeping all information about the supervisee in strict confidentiality* is the third highest in rank with a mean of 3.67, interpreted as very much aware. Although the clients indeed violated the law, they still have the value and dignity as human beings. It is provided in RA No. 6713 that individuals who do voluntary services are covered with policies on confidentiality of records. Since VPAs are partners of the agency, they can be given the privilege to access information so they can develop appropriate methods of approaching their clients. This is the reason why the PPOs conduct a background investigation on potential VPA if he or she is reputable and of good moral character in a community before they are actually recruited.

On the other hand, *job placement facilitator* as a function of the VPAs got the lowest mean of 3.21, interpreted as aware. Thus, the finding implies that the supervising VPAs are not so particular with doing networking with other members of the community who can offer a valuable job placement service for those offenders who have difficulty in finding work. The VPAs are not so knowledgeable of this because most often the active supervision over the clients by VPAs is already a great help on the part of PPOs especially if VPAs come from distant places. Though job placement service is part of VPAs' function, some PPOs opt to do it on their own or through networking with GOs/NGOs or private individuals especially if they happen to know someone who can offer a job. Some field officers said, "this is just an additional task given to them and as supervising VPAs their main functions are more on monitoring of the activities of their clients as well as guidance and counseling, unlike the resource individual type of VPAs whose main function is to share skills to the clients or find a job for them" (Personal Communication, 2016).

In general, the VPAs are knowledgeable and abreast of their functions and responsibilities since the VPAs rated their awareness with the overall mean of 3.54, interpreted as very much aware. Nevertheless, more orientation and training are required to deepen their knowledge about their functions and responsibilities. The VPAs can provide more quality services if they are honed more as therapists to their clients.

### ***Problems that may directly or indirectly affect both VPAs and PPOs***

Table 2 illustrates the summary of mean, standard deviation and qualitative description on challenges in volunteerism that may directly or indirectly affect both VPAs and PPOs. The common and serious challenges encountered by the respondents of DOJ-PPA were the *insufficiency of budget*, *absence of VPAs in a barangay or municipality*, *distances traveled to visit clients* and *conflict of schedule of VPAs to attend meetings and activities*. This study established through the findings that programs and services involving financial matters are quite bothersome to VPAs and PPOs.

As gleaned from Table 2, insufficiency of government budget in order to reimburse actual expenses, travel allowances or incentives for volunteers got the highest mean of 2.87, interpreted as serious. It implies that insufficient funds are often the problem in the agency, especially in field offices. No matter how often they want to visit their clients at home or at work, the PPOs and the VPAs are sometimes constrained because of budget insufficiency especially if they have to travel miles or some distances or they need to pay

for the fare which is more than the amount given or reimbursed by the government (Personal Communication, 2016).

The VPA Program Policy Guidelines of DOJ-PPA states that eliciting public support and cooperation is a big task that requires time, money and great effort. Hence, reimbursement of expenses incurred by volunteers requires concern from government agencies especially the Finance department (Pospíšilová, 2011). According to one CPPO, somehow, they have minimal problem on budget allotment to most activities conducted by their office; and activities conducted by VPAs due to the financial aid given by their local government unit. At least five VPAs were funded by the LGU to attend the 1st Regional VPA Congress (Personal Communication, 2016).

**Table 2. Problems that may directly or indirectly affect both VPAs and PPOs**

	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Qualitative Description</b>
a.	There is insufficient budget of the government to reimburse actual expenses, travel allowances or incentives for volunteers.	2.87	Serious
b.	There is an absence of VPAs in other barangays or even municipality.	2.70	Serious
c.	There is long distance travelled by either VPAs or PPOs to visit clients.	2.59	Serious
d.	There is conflict of schedule of VPAs during meeting and other activities.	2.55	Serious
e.	There is lack of employable skills of VPAs which can be imparted to client/s being supervised and/or for the former to be financially able.	2.50	Moderately Serious
f.	There is insufficient orientation and training for VPAs.	2.08	Moderately Serious
g.	There is insufficient motivation for VPAs.	2.06	Moderately Serious
h.	There is no long-term commitment to serve as VPA.	1.94	Moderately Serious
i.	There is a threat to VPAs or PPOs by clients.	1.91	Moderately Serious
j.	There are "vigilante volunteers" also known as younger new volunteers who have high expectations of voluntary organizations who can be selective.	1.90	Moderately Serious
k.	There is a changing expectation where each generation has differing expectations of volunteer service.	1.88	Moderately Serious
l.	There is unresponsiveness especially when either a VPA or PPO needs immediate response on activities.	1.83	Moderately Serious
m.	There is a tension among VPAs and PPOs.	1.77	Moderately Serious
	<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.54</b>	<b>Very Much Aware</b>

This study also shows that absence of VPAs in other barangays or in a municipality is the second-highest in rank with a mean of 2.70, interpreted as serious. This implies the need for the continuous recruitment of more passionate individuals who can help usher reformation and rehabilitation services needed by clients in every barangay or municipality. The problems with peace and order in every barangay can be minimized if more citizens will take an active part in the rehabilitation of clients.

Some factors that may cause the absence of VPAs in a barangay or municipality include the absence of clients to be supervised in a barangay or municipality; the presence of few PPOs working in the field office and hence, lack the luxury of time to visit all barangays; and the discontinuation of the voluntary service of VPAs when the case of their clients has already been terminated, as affirmed by respondents through conversation with the researcher. It was however mentioned that there were instances when VPAs from one barangay were requested to attend to clients in other barangays and or municipalities due to the absence of VPAs in that place (Personal Communication, 2016).

Findings suggest that, if possible, VPAs who will be recruited is someone near the residence or workplace of the clients. It is best if the VPA is a close neighbor of the client being supervised. As reflected in Table 2, long distances traveled by either VPAs or PPOs to visit clients was rated the third highest in rank with a mean of 2.59, interpreted as serious. This implies that distance can affect the performance of VPAs and PPOs. It can reduce their enthusiasm to daily or frequently monitor and socialize with their clients and families including neighbors (Hill, 2002). A VPA who is a resident near the place of the client does not need to travel long distances just to get information on the activities of the latter.

It is of great advantage if the VPAs and the clients are bound with reasonable distance because they can get along well with each other including the neighborhood, and with that, VPAs will no longer be seen as mere agents of the government (Hill, 2002 & Personal Communication, 2016). According to some CPPOs, distance is the problem especially for PPOs who are in rural areas; unlike those who are in cities as evidenced by field officers in other field offices during the conduct of the questionnaire's pretest. This study also affirms the findings of late Ugay (2005) in one field office where distance is a serious concern.

Conversely, conflict among VPAs and or with PPOs is indicated to be of a little problem but need to be addressed. This study shows that tension among VPAs themselves and the PPOs is the indicator that has the lowest mean of 1.77, though interpreted as moderately serious. This implies that VPAs just need a bit of reminders on the ethics of professional work during orientation and training. And a bit of reminder for PPOs to determine the extent of power they can give to their VPAs in a way that the latter will not go beyond what is expected of them.

Causes of misunderstanding among VPAs and PPOs may include possessing a domineering attitude in their regular workplace which they tend to bring in the voluntary setting. Also, there are other VPAs who may not be comfortable working with the other members. Moreover, there are VPAs who may abuse the power given to them by PPOs. A misunderstanding may arise due to the reason that VPAs come from different professions and working environment. According to some PPOs, they do not encounter this type of challenge, though some officers in other field offices admit that they do. As

stated in social capital, conflicts may arise because of social structure (Tzanakis, 2013). Volunteers are not that perfect like an angel. Some are good, but others can be indifferent (Berkhan, 2011). Therefore, learning and recognizing how to express power without dominating and ignoring others (Kirasic, 2004), may bring about successful volunteering within an organization (Bressler, 2005).

### ***The difference in problems according to VPAs and PPOs***

Table 3 presents the t-test results of the differences on how the challenges affect the respondents. An independent sample of t-test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference between VPAs and PPOs concerning how they were challenged by the perceived challenges.

The test revealed a statistically significant difference between the VPAs and PPOs in *insufficiency of budget* (t-value=-3.12,  $P<0.05$ ); *distance travelled to visit clients* (t-value=-2.65,  $P<0.05$ ); and *tension among respondents* (t-value=2.65,  $P<0.05$ ). The significant difference between these three indicators may have been caused by the different perceptions of the respondents due to the difference in their kind of employment.

One group is a permanent worker in the agency whose one of his/her statutory functions is to supervise probationers, parolees, conditional pardonees regardless of their geographical location since prior to their appointment as PPOs, they are made to sign a waiver which states that they are willing to be assigned anywhere in the region while the other group is just working voluntarily. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between VPAs and PPOs is affirmed although there is an isolated case that caused the difference among the two groups of respondents.

Specifically, the insufficiency of budget does not directly affect the VPAs since it is the PPOs who are directly affected. VPAs do not realize how the budget is being stretched out for rehabilitation activities of DOJ-PPA towards clients and on volunteerism but the PPOs do. Accordingly, only 50 pesos per client is being reimbursed by the government to the VPAs which according to them is a meager amount to cover actual expenses. Some VPAs do not exactly feel the pressure about the funds allocated by the government since they just focus on the supervision of their clients. According to the field officers or PPOs, they are directly affected because they are the ones who take care of all kinds of budgeting. They consider all expenses for the rehabilitation activities not only for volunteerism.

Further, the challenge on distance traveled to visit clients is more serious for PPOs because more sacrifice is required for them to travel afar to visit their clients. The location of the field office is far from barangays and or from municipalities. Hence, the presence of VPAs especially in distant places where there are clients to be supervised and to be monitored daily is really an advantage. PPOs are not excused, however, for their monthly visit as well (Personal Communication, 2016).

According to some PPOs, they are more and directly affected by their distance with clients because they need to walk or travel some kilometers/miles and even traverse or trek mountains before they could reach the residence of their clients, unlike the VPAs. Sometimes they are lucky when several clients stay in the same place because the PPOs can travel and visit them all at once in one place (Personal Communication, 2016).

Table 3. The t-test Results of the Differences in problems according to VPAs and PPOs

	Indicators	Types of Respondent	Mean	t-value	P-value	Remarks
a.	There is insufficient budget of the government to reimburse actual expenses, travel allowances or incentives for volunteers.	VPA	2.77	-3.12	0	S
		PPO	3.3			
b.	There is an absence of VPAs in other barangays or even municipality.	VPA	2.7	0.18	0.86	NS
		PPO	2.67			
c.	There is long distance travelled by either VPAs or PPOs to visit clients.	VPA	2.5	-2.65	0.01	S
		PPO	2.96			
d.	There is conflict of schedule of VPAs during meeting and other activities.	VPA	2.53	-0.48	0.63	NS
		PPO	2.63			
e.	There is lack of employable skills of VPAs which can be imparted to client/s being supervised and/or for the former to be financially able.	VPA	2.53	0.86	0.39	NS
		PPO	2.37			
f.	There is insufficient orientation and training for VPAs.	VPA	2.14	1.65	0.1	NS
		PPO	1.81			
g.	There is insufficient motivation for VPAs.	VPA	2.07	0.15	0.88	NS
		PPO	2.04			
h.	There is no long-term commitment to serve as VPA.	VPA	1.96	0.4	0.69	NS
		PPO	1.89			
i.	There is a threat to VPAs or PPOs by clients.	VPA	1.98	1.82	0.07	NS
		PPO	1.59			
j.	There are "vigilante volunteers" also known as younger new volunteers who have high expectations of voluntary organizations who can be selective.	VPA	1.97	1.99	0.06	NS
		PPO	1.59			
k.	There is a changing expectation where each generation has differing expectations of volunteer service.	VPA	1.88	0.2	0.85	NS
		PPO	1.85			
l.	There is unresponsiveness especially when either a VPA or PPO needs immediate response on activities.	VPA	1.86	0.86	0.39	NS
		PPO	1.7			
m.	There is a tension among VPAs and PPOs.	VPA	1.86	2.65	0.01	S
		PPO	1.41			

A significant difference is also observed on tension among VPAs and PPOs probably because some VPAs are more sensitive to actions and behaviors of their fellow VPAs. Field officers may not know when there is a problem among the members especially if they do not spend some time with VPAs. According to some VPAs, they can feel when something is wrong. It cannot be denied that some VPAs with higher professions sometimes look down on others. However, in some field offices, this challenge is not serious (Personal Communication, 2016).

In the light of the findings of the study, the VPAs are knowledgeable and abreast of their functions and responsibilities, but needs more improvement. Challenges were generally rated as moderately serious but attention is much needed on the budget to reimburse actual expenses, travel allowances or incentives; absence of VPAs in other barangays or municipality; and conflict of schedule of VPAs during meetings and activities.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Generally, the VPAs understood their assigned tasks. They understood the implications of their work as key indicators of social capital and therapists on behavior modification. And by large, the VPAs and PPOs encountered challenges on budget, absence of VPAs in barangays, and long-distances traveled by both in reaching the clients' workplace or residence. The VPAs were capable of coping with the challenges even if some may have financial difficulties to effectively carry out the tasks they have voluntarily accepted. The PPOs as well were coping with their pressures and stresses because of their commitment and the active supervision of the VPAs despite the latter's busy hours including distance from clients. However, when conducting orientation and training for VPAs, lectures must be in a form of full discussion, focusing on their functions and responsibilities so they will be more knowledgeable and more effective in reforming and rehabilitating their clients. Solicitation from Local Government Units (LGUs) and lobbying with the government through the Finance and Management Division for the increase of travel allowance for VPAs including PPOs should be continually conducted.

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